

20 August 1982

ISRAEL-LEBANON - 0600 Sitrep

U.S. Embassy Beirut reports that as of 1000 local time everything remains quiet. Tel Aviv radio carried the announcement by an IDF spokesman today that ceasefire violations occurred in the Beirut area during the night when IDF positions in the Hayy as-Sallum area were fired upon. It also reported that several mortar shells were fired at the eastern sector of Beirut, south of the Beirut port. The spokesman said the IDF did not return fire. (C)

There is no additional reporting on Bashir movements toward the Beirut port area to prevent its use by the French contingent of the multinational force.

The U.S. Ambassador in Israel met with David Kimche early this morning to Bashir's threat to block the departure to force the Sunni opposition to provide the necessary quorum for Bashir's election. Kimche said Israel agrees it would be disastrous if Bashir interfered with the departure, and they would continue to impress upon him the importance of the departure going ahead as scheduled. He said Bashir was depressed once it became obvious that Saib Salam would not support his candidacy.

Kimche reviewed what he sees as the two possibilities for Bashir:

1. Bashir to be elected with the support of the Muslims and at least the acquiescence of the Sunnis
2. Bashir to continue to block the election of anyone else, ultimately leading to the constitutionally legal situation in which Bashir would be appointed Prime Minister by Sarkis at the end of his term and would be responsible for exercising the powers of President until elections were held.

Kimche stated that he believed the first option was the most desirable.

(S NF OC)

King Fahd sent message to U.S. Ambassador in Saudi Arabia encouraging US support in delaying the elections in Lebanon. He stated that the situation was too unstable and that the elections should be postponed until the departure of the Palestinians were complete. He stated that he did not mind if Bashir were elected, but did not agree with the way he was trying to achieve it. (S NF OC )

State Dept. review completed